## Transactive Writing: Across the Grades and Content Areas Summer 2007 Writing Training The Kentucky Department of Education Facilitators: Depeka Croft,

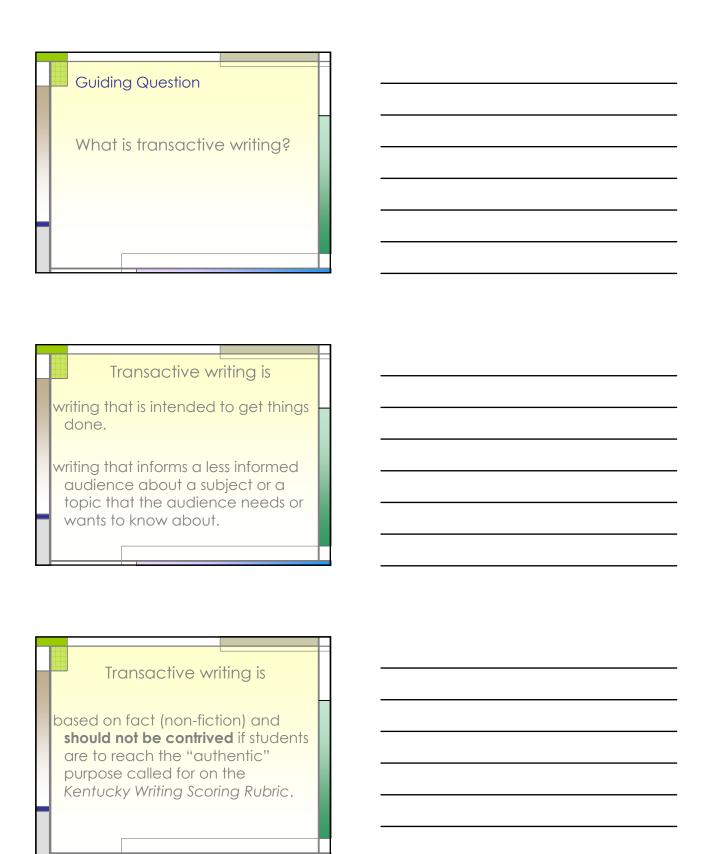
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#### Materials for this session

http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructio nal+Resources/High+School/English+Langua ge+Arts/Writing/Writing++Cluster+Leader+Tra ining+Materials.htm

#### **Guiding Questions**

- What is transactive writing?
- Why is transactive writing so important, and what makes transactive writing "authentic"?
- How can teachers better integrate transactive writing into classroom instruction?
- What specific transactive writing concerns need particular attention?



## Some features of transactive writing Transactive writing should have a focused purpose—an authentic reason for being written beyond simply completing an assignment. Transactive writing should take the form of writing seen in the world beyond the classroom. Common transactive forms are speeches, letters, articles, editorials, proposals, etc. Transactive writing should address a targeted audience besides the teacher (in writing for publication).

## Transactive writing should Engage the reader with an interesting beginning, one that gives some context or reason for the information which follows. Transactive writing should demonstrate depth of idea development with specific, relevant details and move the reader through the piece with logical organizational strategies. Most of all, when writing for publication, transactive writing should be based on student choice and **ownership**. Students should have a choice in defining their topics and base the writing and the focus of the writing on their own inquiry questions.

#### Helpful Hints

If you are asking students to write transactively to assess their understanding of content knowledge, you may be limiting what the student can do for a piece written for publication (this does not mean a piece intended for publication doesn't demonstrate content knowledge, however).

Writing to assess content understanding is a perfectly legitimate kind of writing. However, this type of writing is called writing to demonstrate learning and is **not** the kind of writing that is expected in the portfolio.

Writing that is intended for publication has an expectation of an "authentic focused purpose," and teachers may help students create authentic pieces for publication if they allow as much student choice and ownership as possible.

# Guiding Question Why is transactive writing so important, and what makes transactive writing "authentic"?

Why is transactive writing important?

## Transactive writing is □ practical and promotes writing skill development. □ appropriate for content area classes. □ applicable in the workplace and in life beyond school. □ included in portfolio assessment. □ assessed in on-demand writing assessment.

Why is authenticity in transactive writing so important?	
Let's take a broader look:	
From a recent report from the Alliance for Excellence in Education, "[Schools should] make efforts to motivate those students (many of	
whom have been demoralized by years of academic failure) and engage them in reading and writing assignments that tap into their individual interests" (2007).	

#### So what does that mean?

Instruction in transactive writing is one area that can help students make the large gains toward developing literacy and communication skills, preparing for life beyond school, and improving assessment scores.

How can teachers help students improve authenticity in transactive writing?	
Let's review  To understand our conversation about "authenticity" in transactive writing, it's important to understand the three types of writing that should be integrated across the content areas and grade levels.	

Three types of writing called for in the Kentucky Program of Studies (across grades and content areas)

Writing to Learn

Writing to Demonstrate Learning

Writing for Publication

### Let's start with considering the idea of authenticity... "Authenticity" suggests that the student has made many of the decisions regarding the development of the writing—that the writing is "authentic," real, or genuine to the individual student. In other words, the student has had opportunities to choose the purpose or purposes for which he/she needs or wants to write. To help students improve authenticity in their writing Give the student the opportunity to determine his/her audience and focus based on the purpose he/she wants to achieve. Help students maintain ownership in the writing. To help students improve authenticity in their writing Help the student explore—through writing—an area of inquiry that matters to him or her. Do not automatically assume that writing to demonstrate learning can automatically be "turned

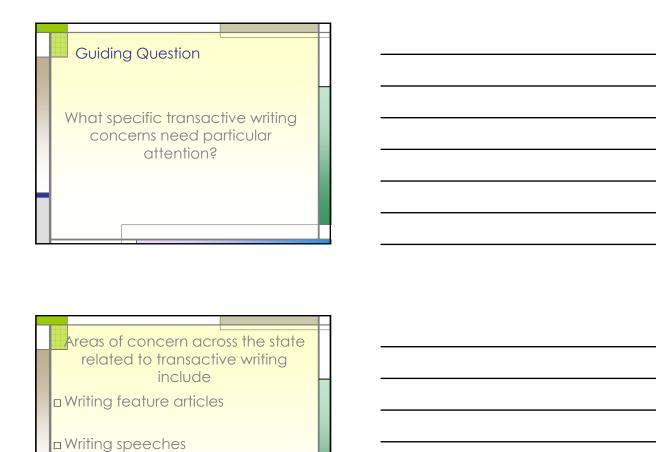
into" a sample for publication.

### Improving Authenticity In short, to improve the authenticity of a piece of transactive writing, the student must make many of the decisions and take ownership of his/her writing. The writing should **matter** to the student. Improving Authenticity Certainly, in writing for publication, students can and should demonstrate their learning to a high degree. It's simply that the teacher should not control the writing so much that the ownership is removed from the writing opportunity. A final thought on authenticity □ The word "authentic" suggests far more than a real-world form. Though "realworld" forms certainly contribute to authentic transactive writing, there is much more to the definition of authenticity as it applies to writing. □ It's worth noting that **not all real-world**

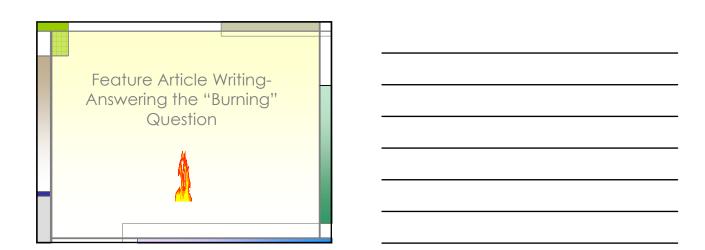
forms allow students to demonstrate the criteria on the Kentucky Writing Scoring

Rubric.

## **Guiding Question** How can teachers better integrate transactive writing into classroom instruction? As yourself this question... What units and lessons that you already teach in your grade level and content area lend themselves to transactive writing? Transactive writing should be integrated into instruction through ■ Writing-to-Learn activities □ Writing-to-Demonstrate Learning activities ■ Writing-for-Publication opportunities ■ Mini-lessons Content area writing On-demand practice



□ Integrating analysis into transactive writing



#### **Guiding Questions**

- What is the feature article?
- What are the types of feature articles?
- What are the characteristics of feature articles?
- □ How can I improve my instruction of the feature article?

#### A Feature Article is ...

- A human interest story that answers a higher-level question (how? or why?)
- Attempts to involve the reader emotionally
- □ One that deals with real events and issues
- □ A whole piece of writing meant to be read from beginning to end.

#### Types of Feature Articles

- Human Interest--most common, describes an aspect that makes him, her, or it interesting
- Personality--focuses on the personality of person writing about
- □ How-To--process of "doing" something
- □ Past Events--focuses on historical events
- News--focuses on human-interest of some late breaking news

# Characteristics of Feature Articles Answers a how or why question(s) Evokes an emotional reaction: joy, sympathy, anger, frustration, contentment, or some other emotion Gives depth and meaning to some complicated issue or item Is nonfiction and factual, research-based

### Characteristics of Feature Articles

- □ Focuses on subject of interest to **targeted** audience
- May contain some short story elements
- Uses a lead that attracts readers
- □ Uses catchy titles, headings, subheadings
- □ Uses voice or tone **appropriate** to its subject
- Ends with a closing that connects back to the beginning
- Leaves the reader with something to think about

#### WOW! WHAT A DIFFERENCE?

#### Feature Articles

- Offers fresh, focused insights
- Awareness of audience throughout
- Appeals to the audience's interests
- Leaves the audience with new insight or knowledge
- Almost persuasive, always reaching out to connect with readers and maintain interest

#### Reports

- Presents information in order to inform rather than to interest audience
- □ Aimed at everyone
- Leaves the audience with the question of what to do with the information
- □ Robotic, dry

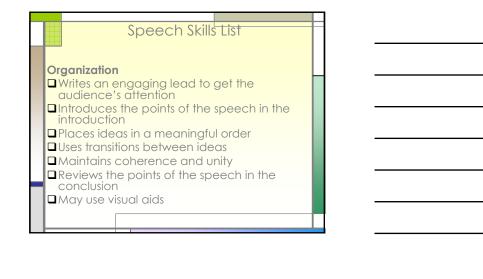
## Improving Instruction— Model, Model Provide feature articles Identify the author's focused purpose (how or why question) Identify how the answer was developed Identify how the writer tied back to the beginning and left the reader with something to think about

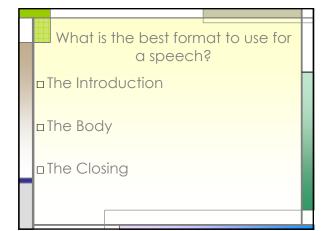
## Feature Article 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Example BOO! Stay Safe On Halloween

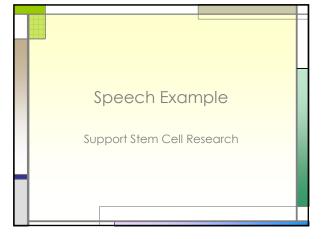
## GETTING STARTED | Focusing-generating a list of interesting topics | | Prewriting-determining the most interesting topic | | Prewriting-researching the topic | | Prewriting-determining the type of feature article | | Choosing the single focused purpose | | Determining the organization | | Drafting the lead | | Drafting the body | | Drafting the conclusion | | Revising and editing | | Publishing

## **RESOURCES** □ Kentucky Writing Handbook, KDE, Fall 2006 Kentucky Marker Papers □ Building the Foundation the WRITE WAY by Donna Vincent and Susan A. Miller Webster's New World Student Writing Handbook, Fourth Edition by Sharon Sorenson "Feature Article Writing in the Elementary School" by Ruby K. Clayton □ Dr. Charles Whitaker, materials, EKU. Speeches What writing skills should be taught to write a effective speech? Clear occasion or context Presentation versus the document Kentucky Marker Papers Skills List

#### Speech Skills List Purpose ☐ Focuses on the purpose (e.g., to entertain, to persuade, to inform, to demonstrate) □Uses appropriate tone for the event, audience and purpose Speech Skills List Addressing the Audience's Needs ■ Shows an understanding of the audience's perspective ■ Writes from the perspective of an informed speaker to a less-informed listener ■ Anticipates audience's reactions, questions, lack of understanding ■ Makes it clear what the audience member should know, do, and/or believe as a result Speech Skills List Idea Development/support ■ Develops ideas which are connected to the core content ■ Uses appropriate strategies to develop ideas ☐ Uses information from a variety of sources □ Clarifies and interprets ideas ☐ Uses persuasive techniques ☐ Provides support which is accurate and through enough to achieve the purpose of the speech.







### Where can I find examples of speeches? □ On-demand Writing Released Items Packet (Spring 2007) □ Kentucky Marker Papers (Revised version coming soon) Online resources □ Professional literature KDE Summer WebEx training: Transactive Writing Integrating Analysis into Transactive Writing Instruction Analysis... □ Is a means of idea development. By definition, analysis means the student is "breaking down" the problem, issue, or topic to examine that problem, issue, or topic to draw new conclusions about it. □ Strong analysis should be done in the service of a real purpose (not simply to produce an analytical piece for the

portfolio).

#### **Authentic Analysis**

Let's look at the introduction from two different analytical transactive samples. While analysis should be happening at all grade levels, these samples were written by twelfth grade students.

#### Greek Idealism vs. Roman Realism

You may ask what is idealism? What is realism and how do they differ from one another? In this paper, I am going to explain these words in contrast with their definitions. . . I will also be using examples of art to demonstrate how Greek Idealism differs from Roman Realism.

Idealism is the theory in art which the artist paints of sculpts. It is his idea of what the picture or sculpture should resemble and not how the artist truly sees the person or object that is being painted or sculpted. Idealism is also the conformity to or the belief in ones ideas. These art works do not show reality in any way.

One example of art work that shows Greek Idealish is the Greek statue of kore. A kore is a clothed maiden

#### Keeping America's Food Supply Safe

Imagine a time thousands of years ago before recorded history, when the first farmer scratched in the dirt and planted the first seeds. Ever since that momentous day, agriculture has been in a constant state of evolution. Change is a concept that we rarely like to embrace [sic] however, change is inevitable. We might feel better about our changing world if we call it growth, revolution, or transformation. No matter what we want to call it, we live in a constantly changing society. The American agriculturalist is no stranger to change. In order to be successful in today's rapidly changing advancing world, he must be adaptable. He must arm himself with the knowledge of his shifting surroundings in order to climb above the rest. . . .

#### "Keeping..." continued

Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_ and I'm representing the \_\_\_\_ County FFA Chapter.

During my generation's lifetime, we have never witnessed America make so many changes and adjustments as it has in the past year and a half. The events of September 11th touched our hearts but left us with a new sense of national insecurity. Our nation is now on guard against madmen who threaten our existence. Not all of us can serve in the military or law enforcement but we must all recognize our responsibilities here at home. The American agriculturalist has the all-important task of keeping the food supply safe from terrorists who endanger the well being of the world's population...

### How do we integrate analysis into instruction?

- Have students ask their own analytical questions about areas of interest.
- Work with students on critical thinking skills to promote analytical thinking skills.
- Work with students in all grade levels and content areas about analytical thinking and writing.
- Ask students to answer how? Why? or to what degree? questions in their writing.

#### Final thoughts

Transactive writing is an important category of writing that should be integrated into instruction across the grade levels and content areas.

Transactive writing is practical in that it is one of the categories of	
writing that will help students in life	
beyond school—in the college, in	
the workplace, in their lives as citizens.	
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□ Transactive writing that is meant —	
for publication should allow room for student choice and ownership,	
so that students may achieve the	
"authentic focused purpose" indicated on the scoring rubric.	
A Recap	
After studying portfolio analysis	
results and talking with educators, three particular concerns need	
attention:	
□ Feature articles	
□ Speeches	_
□ Integrating analysis into transactive writing	
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Transactive writing is important for students to practice in all grade levels and content areas.

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